

Guidelines for the Use of Computing and Networked Information Resources

The Halifax Area School District makes available computing and networked information resources that may be used by district students, faculty, staff, and community members. These resources are intended to be used for only educational purposes and/or to carry out the legitimate business of the district. Appropriate use of these resources includes instruction, independent study, authorized research, community participation as approved by the School Board, and the official work of the offices, departments, recognized student organizations, and agencies of the district.

The following list does not cover every situation which pertains to proper, or improper, use of the resources, but it does suggest some of the responsibilities which you accept if you choose to use a District information resource or the network access which the District provides. Additionally, the District Policy on Copyrighted Material (Policy number 814) of March 1995, is considered an integral part of these guidelines.

1. Use of computer technology shall be limited to educational and instructional purposes related to the class curriculum of the particular user and for business use by District employees, for recognized and authorized use by student and community organizations and for no other purposes.
2. The Internet and computer technology will not be used for illegal activity, transmitting offensive materials, hate mail, discriminatory remarks or obtaining, transmitting or otherwise communicating indecent, obscene or pornographic material. Use of the Halifax Area School District's computer technology or the Internet for fraudulent or illegal copying, communication, taking or modification of material or any other activity in violation of the law is prohibited and will be referred to the proper authorities. The Internet and computer technology will not be used for personal or profit purposes, lobbying or advertising.
3. The Halifax Area School District, in its discretion, reserves the right to log, access and/or review, without prior notice, use of any/all District computer technology, including but not limited to, file servers, desktop and portable computers, and the Internet. This data will be used to ensure appropriate use of technology, including space utilization, license compliance, and appropriateness of content.
4. Network accounts are to be used only by the authorized owner of the account for the authorized purpose.
5. Users shall not intentionally seek information, obtain copies of or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent other users on the network.
6. Vandalism will result in cancellation of privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user or the Internet or other networks that are connected to the Internet backbone. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses. The user shall be responsible for damages to the Halifax Area School District's equipment, systems and software resulting from deliberate or willful acts.
7. If you have a computer account or operate a system, you are responsible for the use made of that account or system. You should set a password that will protect your account from unauthorized use, and which will not be easily guessed. If you discover that someone has made unauthorized use of your account, you should change the password and report the incident to an administrator or teacher. Never share your password or account with anyone. You have full responsibility for the use of your account, and you will be held responsible for any policy violations that are traced to your account.
8. If you encounter or observe a problem in system or network security, you should report the problem to an administrator or teacher. Misuse of security gaps will be considered a serious offense. Attempts to decrypt or translate encrypted material, or to obtain system privileges to which you are not entitled are prohibited.

9. Messages, sentiments, and declarations sent as electronic mail or sent as electronic postings should meet the same standards for distribution or display as if they were actual documents. Attempts to alter the origin (i.e. the "from" or "addresser" lines) in electronic mail, messages, or postings will be considered a violation of District rules. You are free to publish your opinions, but they should be clearly and accurately identified as coming from you.

10. You should be aware that there are Federal laws which govern certain aspects of computer and data communications, for example, Federal statute 18 USC 1030 (Computer Crime Act). Members of the Halifax Area School District community are expected to obey any applicable laws, as well as observe and respect District rules and regulations.

11. The District allows you to use many programs and data which have been obtained under contracts or licenses which state that they may be used, but not copied, cross-assembled, or reverse-compiled. You, as the user, are responsible for determining that programs or data are not restricted in this manner before copying them in any form, or before reverse-assembling or reverse-compiling them in whole or in any part. If it is unclear whether you have permission to copy such software, assume that you may not do so. District administrators will assist with any questions regarding software usage and licensing issues. **ALL software must be approved by the Technology Department prior to installation on district workstations and/or servers.**

12. The use of district computer technology (Internet, local network, equipment, etc.) is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. (Each student who receives an account will discuss appropriate and acceptable use with a Halifax Area School District staff member.) The administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the administrators may close an account at any time as required by Halifax Area School District. The administration, faculty, and staff of Halifax Area School District may request the system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user accounts. The Halifax Area School District may modify the use of or terminate the availability of the Internet and network accessibility at its sole discretion. Uploading, downloading, installation, or use of unauthorized games, programs, files or other electronic media is prohibited. If you create, alter, or delete any electronic information contained in, or posted to any District computer or affiliated network it will be considered forgery.

14. You are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following: a) Be polite. Do not get abusive in your messages to others. b) Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities or any other inappropriate language. Illegal activities are strictly forbidden. c) Do not reveal your personal address or phone numbers of students or colleagues. d) Note that electronic mail (e-mail) is not guaranteed to be private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities. e) Do not use the network in such a way that you would disrupt the use of the network by other users. f) All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property. Exemplary behavior is expected on virtual field trips. Treat people you meet on the Internet as if they were honored guests at your school.

15. Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If you feel you can identify a security problem on Internet, you must notify a teacher or administrator. Do not demonstrate the problem to other users. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to Internet.

16. You should be sensitive to the public nature of shared facilities and: a) take care not to display or generate on screens, computers or printers images, sounds or messages which could create an atmosphere of discomfort or harassment to others. b) Refrain from transmitting to others in any location or receiving inappropriate images, sounds or messages which might reasonably be considered harassing or obscene. c) Avoid any physical destruction or removal of equipment from public facilities.

17. You must not use computing resources for leisure activities such as game playing and other trivial applications; sending frivolous or excessive mail or messages locally or over an affiliated network; or printing excessive copies of documents, files, images or data. You should refrain from using unwarranted or excessive amounts of storage or printing documents numerous times because you have not checked thoroughly for errors

and corrections. You should be sensitive to special needs for software and services available in only one location, and allow access to others whose work requires these special services. Do not knowingly degrade the performance of the network. For example, chain letters are prohibited for this reason.

18. If you ever feel harassed or threatened by somebody on the network, please bring it to the attention of a teacher or administrator immediately.

19. No viewpoint will be restricted on the network. However, authors of unpopular or unorthodox viewpoints must take responsibility for the consequences of their words and opinions.

20. Diligent effort must be made by the user to delete mail daily from personal mail directories to avoid unnecessary use of file server disk space.

21. Impersonation, anonymity, and pseudonyms are not permitted.

22. Failure to follow the procedures listed above by students or employees of the Halifax Area School District may result in suspension or loss of the right to use the Internet and/or Halifax Area School District's computer technology and subsequent disciplinary methods including expulsion or employee dismissal. All students and employees who wish to use the Internet, network and computer technology tools must sign an Acceptable Use Policy Agreement form that will be kept on file in the Administrative Office of the District. If the user is a student under the age of 18, the signature of the student's parent or guardian will also be required.

In no event shall the Halifax Area School District be liable for any damage, whether direct, indirect, special or consequential, arising out of the use of the Internet or other district computer technology.

CONCLUSION

The Halifax Area School District recognizes that our users have a wide range of needs and requirements. Providing these services for research and instruction entails providing a relatively unrestricted and flexible system and network organization. To this end, we depend on and request that our users practice considerate and responsible computing and adhere to common sense standards. When problems arise, they will be dealt with to insure the unimpaired operation of our systems and network, but we request that all users try to be considerate and prudent in their use of the resources.

In summary, the Acceptable Use Policy mandates that all computer resources will be used for curricular and school district business only. It requires that users of these resources are respectful of the system and other users. The Acceptable Use Policy acts as one part of a system that engenders responsible use of learning tools. It cannot, however, take the place of responsible behavior that requires a concerted effort of parents, teachers, students, and administrators.